Field corn is one of Darlington County’s top row crops, with almost 25,000 acres planted annually at the end of March or beginning of April. A frost event in early April 2016 severely damaged the recently planted corn in several communities in the northeastern part of the county, including Mont Clare, Mechanicsville and Society Hill. With temperatures plunging below 30°F on April 6th and again on the 10th, the earlier planted corn was actually hurt the worst, because the growing point was above ground. Farmers could easily decide that the corn in those fields needed to be replanted, because the entire plant was killed. In some fields where corn was planted later, the growing point of the corn plant was still below the soil surface, protecting it from frost damage. With all of the exposed leaves burned off by the frost, it was hard for one farmer in particular to believe that his corn would recover enough to make a crop, much less suffer no yield loss whatsoever. County Extension Agronomy Agent Trish DeHond and Extension Field Grain Specialist David Gunter visited the field ten days after the frost event to discuss the cost benefits of actually not replanting that particular 55 acre field of irrigated corn. This decision was based on years of experience as well as information in an Extension publication from Purdue University, written by reliable experts on corn production in Indiana. The farmer was convinced after reviewing a chart showing that the percent corn grain yield loss due to defoliation at such an early growth (vegetative stage 3 or “V3”) was predicted to be zero. It is estimated that the farmer would have spent up to an additional $337 to replant that one field of corn. Visited again by agent DeHond on May 17, this beautiful field of waist-high corn plants was observed to be healthy and thriving, providing the perfect background for a photo shoot for SHE magazine’s July issue. The farmer reported that when harvested in June, the yield was over 200 bushels per acre. The corn farmer was able to realize a profit, exceed the state average yield for irrigated corn by over 17%, and save at least $18,500 by following Extension’s advice.
The participants came from all over the state to learn more about business practices, risk management and opportunities that are available. Topics included business and marketing plans, estate planning, and policy decisions.

Annie’s Project is an educational program dedicated to strengthening women’s roles in the modern farm enterprise. Currently classes are being taught in 33 states. Annie’s Project fosters decision-making skills, problem solving and record keeping. Some comments from our past program:

“I had a life changing weekend with an amazing group of women. I believe everything happens for a reason and I see a whole new future ahead of me.”

“Annie's Project was an amazing experience both educationally, socially...and personally.”

“Annie’s Project has been life changing and such a blessing.”

To learn more about SC Annie’s Project go to: [www.clemson.edu/scwagn](http://www.clemson.edu/scwagn)

The fifth South Carolina Annie’s Project was held April 2016 in Georgetown SC. It proved to be another powerful and outstanding program for 23 diverse women in agriculture.

Welcome to SC WAgN

The South Carolina Women’s Agricultural Network (SC WAgN) supports women in agriculture by providing positive learning environments, networking, and empowerment.

The South Carolina Women’s Agricultural Network (SC WAgN) provided through Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development continues to grow. The primary purposes of SC WAgN are to encourage and support women in agriculture provide and strengthen networks for women in agriculture; provide educational and mentoring opportunities for women in agriculture; raise community awareness of agricultural related issues and concerns; and sustain farming livelihoods.

Membership is open to any person supporting the mission and purpose of SC WAgN. The network is comprised of women farmers, agricultural professionals, agricultural educators, and informed consumers committed to supporting and providing educational opportunities to women working in agriculture and ag-related businesses.

To learn more about SC WAgN and to join, visit [www.clemson.edu/scwagn](http://www.clemson.edu/scwagn).
In May, Leigh Walker assumed the position of Darlington County 4-H Extension Agent. Joining Extension in Orangeburg County in 1990, Leigh led a program that formed new partnerships with community organizations and agencies that targeted issues of “at-risk” youth. In 1995, when Leigh became the 4-H agent in Orangeburg County and later received her MS in Agriculture Education from Clemson, she worked to blend elements of a newer “at-risk” initiative with the more traditional 4-H program.

Growing up in Hartsville, attending the Darlington County public schools, and receiving her BS from Francis Marion, Leigh feels like her roots are in Darlington County. She says she is glad to be “back home.”

“I look forward to listening to people – adults and youth – in Darlington County to see how 4-H can meet needs and build a successful program.”

The Florence Darlington Stormwater Consortium (FDSC), a regional collaborative of Clemson Extension’s Carolina Clear program, seeks to enhance water resource protection and stewardship throughout Florence and Darlington counties through stormwater education, public involvement and outreach, and by fostering partnerships with local governments, citizens, businesses, schools, and organizations to support healthy waterways.

Rainwater harvesting is one practice that can protect water resources. By collecting rooftop runoff, the amount of water flowing across the landscape is reduced which decreased the potential for that runoff to pick up pollutants and transport them to waterways. In addition to water quality protection, rainwater harvesting also conserves water by using the stored water instead of supplemental irrigation that depends on surface water or groundwater.

To encourage rainwater harvesting in the Consortium area, the FDSC hosted an online rain barrel sale in June of 2016. High quality, 50-gallon Ivy rain barrels made of recycled plastic were offered at the discounted price of $68. Twenty-two barrels were purchased and distributed at the Darlington Area Recreation Department.

There are a few rain barrels still available. For more information or to place an order, visit www.rainbarrelprogram.org/fdsc.
For many producers in the Pee Dee Region this has been one of the best years for hay production they have experienced in a long time. Most producers were able to get four cuttings in comparison to the usual three cuttings. Not only did most gain a cutting, the quantity of hay produced for each cutting increased from previous years. Although the hay crop was better this year, so was the weed production. Many producers had weed problems that they had never experienced before. By working with local livestock and forages agents, the producers were able to properly identify the weeds and to apply the recommended herbicide to target those weeds for control. When working with herbicides the producer must always read the label to ensure proper use of the product. Producers reported great control of the weeds throughout the growing season.

With the increased quantity, many producers wanted to know more about the quality of the hay. There was an increase in the number of producers requesting and submitting forage samples for analysis. This information is very valuable to livestock producers to know exactly what they are getting from the hay. Forage analyses give the nutritional value of the hay that is being fed so that producers can know what hay to feed to different classes of livestock and when to feed that hay.
The Pee Dee continues to see growth in small ruminant production throughout the region. Novice and seasoned producers that are seeking information on ways to improve production and efficiency of their operations. In the summer of 2016 a production workshop was held at the Florence Extension Office to address key management practice and fencing concerns for small ruminants. The workshop included the topics of hoof care and management, checklist for parasite control, when to call the veterinarian, management options for improved forage production, fire ant control, and avoiding fencing pitfalls and mistakes. There were several hands on portions of the workshop that included fencing, hoof care, and FAMACHA training. The workshop had 26 participants from the Pee Dee Region. Several participants reported gaining knowledge about better management skills and fencing concerns.

T.J. Savereno is a Senior Associate Extension Agent with Clemson University specializing in wildlife, forestry, and other natural resources. He has worked for Clemson University since 2003, previously at Clemson’s Pee Dee Research and Education Center, and since April 1, 2016 at the Lee County Extension office in Bishopville, SC. Although Lee is his home county, he also serves Clarendon, Darlington, Florence, and Marlboro Counties.

T.J. assists landowners with questions regarding natural resource management in general, but his specialties include restoration and management of the longleaf pine ecosystem, groundcover management in forest ecosystems, native vegetation management, the importance of early successional habitat for wildlife, creating wildlife habitat in urban and suburban landscapes, invasive plant species control, promotion of the use of prescribed fire, and integrating wildlife management with forestry and agricultural systems.

T.J. is currently engaged in a collaborative research and demonstration project with the USDA Forest Service on restoration of groundcover plants of the longleaf pine ecosystem and another with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service on establishing native pollinator gardens in Bishopville and at the Sandhill Research and Education Center in Columbia. He is also working with other members of the Forestry and Natural Resources Extension Team to develop programs on Woodland Management: The First Look and Creating Backyard Wildlife Habitat: If You Build It, They Will Come. These programs will be presented in the coming year.
The Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to people of all ages, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status and is an equal opportunity employer.